

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of creating a virtual print market place over a network comprising:

5 collecting market information, the market information comprising an identity of service providers and the print services and pricing provided by each of the service providers;

obtaining criteria established by an interactive shop for selecting service providers to provide the print services offered to patrons of the interactive shops; and

15 selecting service providers identified in the market information to provide the set of print services based on the criteria and the market information.

2. A method according to Claim 1, wherein an order is placed in the interactive shop, the method further comprising:

20 forwarding an order placed in the interactive shop to at least one of the selected service providers via a market portal.

25 3. A method according to Claim 2, further comprising:

30 transmitting digital data from the interactive shop to the at least one of the selected service providers via another communication channel that excludes the market portal.

4. A method according to Claim 1, further comprising:

35 updating the market information to reflect amount, type and price of print services ordered in an interactive shop from a service provider.

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5. A method according to Claim 1, further comprising:

updating the market information to reflect level of satisfaction associated with a service provider.

6. A method according to Claim 1 further comprising:

forwarding an order from the interactive shop to at least one of the selected service providers via a market portal;

transmitting a status of the order to the market portal; and

rendering payment when the market portal determines that the ordered print services have been provided.

7. A method according to Claim 6, the step of rendering payment further comprising:

collecting fees from a patron of the interactive shop that placed the order; and

rendering payment to the one of the selected service providers from the collected fees.

8. A method according to Claim 6 further comprising:

rendering a percentage of the fees collected from the patron as payment to the interactive shop.

9. A method according to Claim 6 further comprising:

rendering a percentage of the fees collected from the patron as payment to the provider providing the market portal.

10. A method according to Claim 1 wherein the step of selecting service providers is performed

in anticipation of the placement of an order for print services.

5 11. A method according to Claim 1 wherein the step of selecting service providers is performed in response to the placement of an order for print services.

10 12. A method according to Claim 1, further comprising:

 establishing a relationship between the interactive shop and a selected service provider guaranteeing the purchase and supply respectively of a certain quantity of a given service; and

15 updating the market information to specify the quantity of the given service guaranteed.

 13. A method according to Claim 12 further comprising:

20 updating the quantity to reflect filled orders of the print services.

25 14. A method according to Claim 1 wherein the market information includes an identity of interactive shops.

 15. A method of creating a virtual print market place over a network comprising:

30 collecting market information, the market information comprising an identity of service providers, interactive shops, a standardized set of print services and pricing provided by each of the service providers;

35 obtaining a bid from a service provider identifying a print service and terms for providing the print service;

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obtaining a bid from an interactive shop
identifying the print service and terms for
purchasing the print service; and

establishing an agreement between the
service provider and the interactive shop when the
terms of the print service and the interactive shop
are compatible wherein the service provider agrees
to provide and the interactive shop agrees to
purchase the service according to the terms.

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16. A method according to Claim 15 wherein
the terms include a price and quantity of the print
service.

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17. A method according to Claim 15 wherein
the terms include a duration.

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18. A method according to Claim 15 further
comprising:

an obtaining step to obtain a bid from at
least one other service provider to assume a portion
of the service provider's agreement with the
interactive shop; and

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an establishing step to establish a new
agreement between the at least one other service
provider and the interactive shop.

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19. A method according to Claim 18 wherein
the portion of the agreement represents any
remaining quantity of print services not already
provided by the service provider.

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20. A method according to Claim 18 wherein
the portion of the agreement represents less than
all of the remaining quantity of print services not
already provided by the service provider.

21. A method according to Claim 15 further comprising:

an obtaining step to obtain a bid from at least one other interactive shop to assume a portion of the interactive shop's agreement with the service provider; and

an establishing step to establish a new agreement between the at least one other interactive shop and the service provider.

22. A method according to Claim 21 wherein the portion of the agreement represents any remaining quantity of print services not already purchased by the interactive shop.

23. A method according to Claim 21 wherein the portion of the agreement represents less than all of the remaining quantity of print services not already purchased by the interactive shop.

24. A computer-readable memory medium storing computer-executable process steps to create a virtual print market place over a network, the steps comprising.

a collecting step to collect market information, the market information comprising an identity of service providers and the print services and pricing provided by each of the service providers;

an obtaining step to obtain criteria established by an interactive shop for selecting service providers to provide print services offered to patrons of the interactive shops; and

a selecting step to select service providers identified in the market information to provide the set of print services based on the criteria and the market information.

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25. A computer-readable memory medium storing computer-executable process steps according to Claim 24, wherein an order is placed in the interactive shop, further comprising:

5 a forwarding step to forward an order placed in the interactive shop to at least one of the selected service providers via a market portal.

10 26. A computer-readable memory medium storing computer-executable process steps according to Claim 25, further comprising:

15 a transmitting step to transmit digital data from the interactive shop to the at least one of the selected service providers via another communication channel that excludes the market portal.

20 27. A computer-readable memory medium storing computer-executable process steps according to Claim 24, further comprising:

an updating step to update the market information to reflect amount, type and price of print services ordered in an interactive shop from a service provider.

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28. A computer-readable memory medium storing computer-executable process steps according Claim 24, further comprising:

30 an updating step to update the market information to reflect level of satisfaction associated with a service provider.

35 29. A computer-readable memory medium storing computer-executable process steps according to Claim 24 further comprising:

a forwarding step to forward an order from the interactive shop to at least one of the selected service providers via a market portal;

a transmitting step to transmit a status of the order to the market portal; and

a rendering step to render payment when the market portal determines that the ordered print services have been provided.

30. A computer-readable memory medium storing computer-executable process steps according to Claim 29, further comprising:

a collecting step to collect fees from a patron of the interactive shop that placed the order; and

a rendering step to render payment to the one of the selected service providers from the collected fees.

31. A computer-readable memory medium storing computer-executable process steps according Claim 29 further comprising:

rendering step to render a percentage of the fees collected from the patron as payment to the interactive shop.

32. A computer-readable memory medium storing computer-executable process steps according to Claim 29 further comprising:

a rendering step to render a percentage of the fees collected from the patron as payment to the provider providing the market portal.

33. A computer-readable memory medium storing computer-executable process steps according to Claim 24 wherein the step of selecting service providers is performed in anticipation of the placement of an order for print services.

34. A computer-readable memory medium storing computer-executable process steps according

to Claim 24 wherein the step of selecting service providers is performed in response to the placement of an order for print services.

5 35. A computer-readable memory medium storing computer-executable process steps according to Claim 24, further comprising:

an establishing step to establish a relationship between the interactive shop and a
10 selected service provider guaranteeing the purchase and supply respectively of a certain quantity of a given print service; and

an updating step to update the market information to specify the quantity of the given
15 print service guaranteed.

36. A computer-readable memory medium storing computer-executable process steps according to Claim 35 further comprising:

20 an updating step to update the quantity to reflect filled orders of the print services.

37. A computer-readable memory medium storing computer-executable process steps according to Claim 24 wherein the market information includes
25 an identity of interactive shops.

38. A computer-readable memory medium storing computer-executable process steps to create a virtual print market place over a network, the steps comprising:

30 a collecting step to collect market information, the market information comprising an identity of service providers, interactive shops, a
35 standardized set of print services and pricing provided by each of the service providers;

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an obtaining step to obtain a supply bid from a service provider identifying a print service and terms for providing the print service;

an obtaining step to obtain a purchase bid from an interactive shop identifying the print service and terms for purchasing the print service; and

an establishing step to establish an agreement between the service provider and the interactive shop when the terms of the print service and the interactive shop are compatible wherein the service provider agrees to provide and the interactive shop agrees to purchase the print service according to the terms.

39. A computer-readable memory medium storing computer-executable process steps according to Claim 38 wherein the terms include a price and quantity of the print service.

40. A computer-readable memory medium storing computer-executable process steps according to Claim 38 wherein the terms include a duration.

41. A computer-readable memory medium storing computer-executable process steps according to Claim 38 further comprising:

an obtaining step to obtain a bid from at least one other service provider to assume a portion of the service provider's agreement with the interactive shop; and

an establishing step to establish a new agreement between the at least one other service provider and the interactive shop.

42. A computer-readable memory medium storing computer-executable process steps according to Claim 41 wherein the portion of the agreement

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represents any remaining quantity of print service not already provided by the service provider.

5 43. A computer-readable memory medium
storing computer-executable process steps according
to Claim 41 wherein the portion of the agreement
represents less than all of the remaining quantity
of print service not already provided by the service
provider.

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 44. A computer-readable memory medium
storing computer-executable process steps according
to Claim 38 further comprising:

15 an obtaining step to obtain a bid from at
least one other interactive shop to assume a portion
of the interactive shop's agreement with the service
provider; and

20 an establishing step to establish a new
agreement between the at least one other interactive
shop and the service provider.

25 45. A computer-readable memory medium
storing computer-executable process steps according
to Claim 44 wherein the portion of the agreement
represents any remaining quantity of print service
not already purchased by the interactive shop.

30 46. A computer-readable memory medium
storing computer-executable process steps according
to Claim 44 wherein the portion of the agreement
represents less than all of the remaining quantity
of print service not already purchased by the
interactive shop.

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